

NEWS RELEASE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 4, 2005

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"Turning Dreams into Reality"

Phase One of State Park Construction Set To Begin at Historic Cornfield Property

LOS ANGELES – The dreams of many community members to turn the historic 32-acre Cornfield property near downtown Los Angeles into California's newest State Park will move a step closer to becoming a reality with construction of the interim public use site set to begin next week.

State Park officials said construction is scheduled to begin February 7, 2005 on the 10-acre project that will bring an immediate public benefit to the area for the next few years until permanent development of the park can be started. The \$1.2 million interim project, funded by Proposition 40, is expected to be open for use this summer.

For many community members, excitement is beginning to mount as they will finally see the temporary development of a quarter-mile of vacant land turned into a linear green space with walkways lined by native plantings, and a core use area that includes a large lawn area that is both shaded and open. Also planned are a multi-purpose piazza, amphitheater, restrooms, parking, educational panels and historic sites.

"State Parks is pleased to serve the surrounding neighborhoods with open green space while the park is developed," said State Parks Director Ruth Coleman. "We commend members of the Cornfield State Park Advisory Committee and others for their valuable contribution in helping develop the IPU design. State Parks is also pleased to play an important role in both the urban revitalization of Los Angeles and the restoration of the Los Angeles River."

The Cornfield site is rich in history and in culture.

The Cornfield site is located between North Broadway and North Spring Street, near the Los Angeles River and El Pueblo de Los Angeles Historical Monument. The Cornfield Advisory Committee's Cultural/Historical Work Groups expounds the site as "...a vital geographic nexus to Los Angeles' history from its beginnings to the present. It is a vehicle for a revelatory journey through layers of history and culture, a slice through time exposing the dominant, forgotten and ignored stories alike which make Los Angeles so rich and diverse."

The property was purchased by California State Parks with \$30 million in Proposition 12 Park Bond funds in December 2001. The purchase came after residents and a diverse group of community activists formed the Chinatown Yard Alliance and successfully prevented the site from being developed as industrial warehouses.

A series of meetings and workshops have been held over the last two years to involve the general public in the general planning process. A draft general plan document that builds on the concepts generated by the Cornfield State Park Advisory Committee report of April 2003 is expected to be submitted to the California State Parks and Recreation Commission by early summer 2005 for consideration and adoption.

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